

Exh 1644A Murre

Evidentiary Document No. 5377.

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IN THE MATTER of War Crimes and IN THE MATTER of the condition and treatment of Australian and Dutch PW by the Japanese on board the 'RASHIN MARU' on a voyage from Singapore to Moji, Japan.

United Nations War Crimes
Commission Reference.....

I, John Lawrence HANDS of Commonwealth Bank, Forrest Place, PERTH in the State of Western Australia, formerly WX3335 Capt. J.L. HANDS of 2/3 Machine Gun Battalion, make oath and say:

1. I was captured in Java on the 9th March, 1942, and after being in numerous PW camps I was eventually embarked at Singapore for Japan in June, 1944, on the 'Rashin Maru'. The 'Rashin Maru' was a tramp steamer of about five to six thousand tons. It was staffed by Japanese civilians and sailors and in my opinion was part of the Japanese mercantile marine. It had either been bombed or had a fire aboard sometime previously because the bridge had been completely burnt out and amidships the ship gave the appearance of a collection of iron plates. There was a temporary bridge rigged aft. The main structure of the ship had been damaged by this bombing or fire and it was supported by two steel girders running down either side of the ship forward to aft. I saw in the engine room of the ship a plate showing that the ship had been built at Montreal, Canada, about 1914.

2. There were approximately 1000 PW embarked at Singapore on or about the 3rd. June, 1944, and it took about 8 or 9 hours to embark the PW. There were about 750 Australians and about 250 Dutch. There were three holds in the ship and the PW were accommodated in these three holds. The centre hold had no top to it and it had been badly damaged either by a bomb or fire. The top consisted of loose iron plates which freely let in the rain. I myself was in the forward hold with about 300 other PW. After all the men had embarked they were so crowded in these holds that there was not sufficient room for more than approximately 40 percent to lie in a prone position at the one time. All holds were infested with vermin; lice and bugs. During the journey to Japan I frequently visited other holds and conditions there were similar to conditions in the forward hold. A few straw mats were provided but these were insufficient and for the most part the men were lying on the steel floor, no other bed accommodation whatsoever being supplied.

3. The journey from Singapore to Japan took 70 days. During the journey we called at Miri in Borneo and for approximately two and a half weeks were in Manila Harbour but at no time were any of the PW allowed to disembark, and they all stayed on the vessel until

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It reached Japan. At night time those who were not able to get into a prone position had to sleep squatting down or even standing. It was impossible for all the men to get sleep at one time owing to the extremely crowded way they had been herded into the holds and they used to take turns of getting some sleep during the night and some during the day. On rare occasions a portion of the men were allowed to sleep on deck. The occasions however were very rare and regarded as a great privilege. Permission was only granted on 10 or 12 days of the 70 day voyage for men to sleep up on deck. The PW however used frequently to go up on their own accord in the darkness but were generally located on deck by the Japanese guards who would then administer beatings and herd them below again. Whenever PW were discovered on deck without authority from the Japanese, the Japanese after beating the men and herding them below again would then call out the PW officers and administer a severe beating to them. I myself was beaten 17 times on the voyage, approximately 6 of which beatings were administered to me because some of my men had been found on deck without authority. The PW officers made no attempt at all to stop the men going up on deck. The plight of the men in the holds was so pitiful that it was just beyond human feeling to order them to stop below or to try to stop their getting the benefit of a little fresh air.

4. The other beatings I received from the Japanese guards were mainly because I refused to give them food out of the PW rations. I was Quartermaster for the PW party and frequently the Japanese guards would ask me for sugar or other foodstuffs out of the PW rations. I invariably refused and would be given a beating by a Japanese guard. I was beaten with rifle butts, sticks, wooden clogs belonging to the guards and on three occasions with my own clogs. On one occasion when beaten with my own clogs I was knocked unconscious.

5. Repeated requests were made to the Japanese authorities on the ship to allow the men to go up on deck for fresh air and to stretch their limbs but such requests were always met with an unequivocal 'No'. No reason was ever given as to why the men were not allowed up on deck.

6. Living conditions were indescribable. The lice and bugs cause great discomfort to the men and there were no means of getting rid of the vermin. When it rained the majority of the men could get shelter from the rain but a considerable number could not. It was a very wet trip and for the six weeks while we were going through the tropics it rained practically daily. When the men got wet there was no way of drying their clothes.

7. Sanitary facilities consisted of 6 wooden crates slung over the side of the ship. Six men could be accommodated at a time but as a big percentage were suffering from diarrhoea or dysentery, facilities were quite inadequate. The six crates were the only facilities for the PW during the journey. To reach the latrines the men would have to climb up out of the hold and get permission

from the Japanese guard before he could visit the latrines. Frequently of course the men were unable to get out of the holds in time because of dysentery or diarrhoea and had to make their stools in the holds.

8. The only form of washing available to the men was a hose-down from sea water about twice a week. About twice a week the Japanese on the ship would pump sea-water up and the men would be passed through a few at a time, about 20 at a time, and be hosed down by the Japanese in charge for about 30 seconds. This group would then move on and make room for the next group. This was the only washing facility ever made available to the men.

9. The food on this ship was simply shocking and was the worst of any of my experiences as a PW. The diet consisted mainly of rice and dried fish which had gone bad. A small quantity of green vegetables were made available for a few days after calling at a port. For the most part we were without vegetables. The men rapidly developed beri-beri, pellagra and the usual results of mal-nutrition. Their daily ration per man would be about 500 grammes of rice. The daily issue of fish for the 1000 PW was approximately 50 lbs. There was a daily allowance of a total of approximately 12 lbs of sugar for all the PW. We used to save the sugar supply for about 5 or 6 days when there was sufficient to give each man a spoonful each. Drinking water was made available in limited quantities and there was never enough to satisfy the thirst of the men.

10. Punishments, both illegal and excessive, were a daily occurrence. Bearings were administered particularly by the Japanese guards to the PW, sometimes without any reason and sometimes for coming out of the holds without permission. One of the main causes of beatings was failing to salute a Japanese civilian guard whether the PW was an officer, NCO or not. On one occasion one officer Lieutenant RUTHERFORD of a Queensland Artillery Regiment was very badly beaten up and as a consequence had to lie down for three days.

11. There was no IAP available for sick PW. The PW's doctor was Capt. PARKER of Sydney and he was allowed a small space on deck where he could treat men. There was a little space on deck where 8 or 9 of the worst cases were allowed to sleep. The other sick were forced to remain in the holds. Medical supplies were in such small quantities as to be considered almost negligible. Capt. PARKER made repeated requests for more medical supplies but without any result. Practically all PW were sick throughout the voyage. Approximately 90 percent had recurrent malaria and the majority for the greater part of the voyage were suffering from dysentery, beri-beri and pellagra. Every PW was suffering from malnutrition. About 3 or 4 of the PW died on the trip. Capt. PARKER estimated that if the voyage lasted another 2 weeks the deaths would have been very numerous. Two of the men died of

cardiac beri-beri and one died of pellagra. One died of cerebral malaria. My opinion was that we arrived in Japan only just in time to avert a very heavy death roll.

12. We arrived at KOJI, Japan, in September, 1944, and when we arrived the condition of the men was pitiful. Many of them had to be carried ashore on stretchers and a large number could hardly support themselves. They were all scare-crows to look at except for some 100 or 200 who were swollen with beri-beri. Apart from those who were suffering from beri-beri the men looked like skeletons with skin over them.

SWORN by the said John Lawrence HANDS)
at PERTH in the State of Western)
Australia this 12th day of September,) (Signed) J. L. HANDS
1946.

Before me: (Signed) ?

A Commissioner for taking affidavits
in the Supreme Court of Western Australia.

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充分な場所がアリマシタ。ド、船艙も瓦や南京虫等、
思ひで充滿して居りマシタ。日本へ航海中、私、度々他、
船艙へ行ツテ見マシタが、其処に在ル状態は、前部船艙
状態と同様デアリマシタ。僅かばかり、藁布團が在へりし
マシタが、其等ハ不充分デ大部は、若ハ全然寢床ヲ与へらば
歟、床に寢テ居リマシタ。

三、シンガポールから日本迄、旅程は七十日掛リマシタ。旅程途中
我々ハボルネオにハミリしヘ立寄リ、ソレヲ凡ソ二週間半又マシ
港ニ居リマシタが、其間、俘虜ハ誰モが下船ヲ許サズ、
皆、日本へ歸ル迄、船ノ中ニ居リマシタ。夜ハ皆ハ俯向テ
シテ居リシヤガシタリ。又ハ立ツタマ、眠ラネナリマシタ。
皆、船艙ノ中へ極端ニ押込メラシク爲メ、一時ハ眠ルコトハ
不可能デアリ、交代シテ、或者ハ夜、或者ハ晝眠ルコトニシテ
居リマシタ。偶ハ一部ハ、若ハ甲板デ寢ルコトヲ許サレマシタ。
然シ斯様ニ場合ハ非常ニ稀デアリ、又非常ナ思慮ト思
ハレテ居リマシタ。七十日ノ航海中、僅カ十日カ十二日、甲板デ
寢ルコトヲ許サレマシタ。然シ俘虜達ハ屢々暗ガリ、中
ヲ謀ルニヒツテ行マシタが大抵、甲板デハ日本人ノ衛兵ニ
見ツケラレテ打ツテ下ヘ追逐サレマシタ。俘虜ガ日本人ノ許
可ナシニ甲板ヘ出テ見付カルト、日本人ハ何時モ彼等ヲ打ツ
下ヘ追逐シテカウ俘虜ノ將校ヲ呼出シ、ヒトヲ打チマシタ。
私自身ハ航海中、十七回打タレ、其、中、六回程ハ私ノ部下ガ
許可ナシニ甲板ヘ出テ見付カツタ爲デアリマシタ。俘虜ハ
將校ノ部下ガ甲板ヘ上リトウシモ亦機トシマシタ。

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船艙ニ居ル者ノ窮境ハ甚ダ悲惨ナリ。人情トシテ、下ヘ止ムコトヲ命令シタリ。新鮮ナ空氣ヲサシ吸ハウトスルヲヤメサセル様ナコトハ出来マセンデシタ。

四、日本人ノ衛兵カラ受ケタ其他ノ殴打ハ主ニ私が食物ヲ俘虜ノ配給カラ割イテ彼等ニ与ヘルコトヲ拒絶シタカラデアリマス。私ハ俘虜部隊ノ兵站係デアリマシテ、日本人ノ衛兵ハ、屢々私ニ俘虜ノ配給カラ砂糖ヤ他ノ食料品ヲホメテ来マシタ。私ハ何時モ拒絶シテ日本人ノ衛兵カラ打タレマシタ。

小銃台尻、橋、衛兵ノ下駄ヲ打タレ、又私ノ下駄デ三度打タレマシタ。一度ハ私下駄ヲ打タレタ時ナド意識不明ニ打倒サレマシタ。

五、船ノ日本人責任者ニ対シ、甲板ヘ上ツテ新鮮ナ空氣ヲ吸ヒ、手足ヲ延バストツテ許シテ貰ヒタイト、友々頼ミマシタ。斯ウ云フ要求ハ何時モキツバリ断ハラレマシタ。甲板ヘ出ルコトヲ許サナイ理由ハ一度モ聞キマセンデシタ。

六、生活状態ハ言語ニ絶シタモデアリマシタ。風ヤ南京虫ハ俘虜達ニ非常ニ不快ヲ与ヘ之ハ予ニ悪虫ヲ退治スル方法ハアリマセンデシタ。雨が降ルト大部分ノ者ハ雨ヲヨケルコトが出来マシタが、出来ナイ者モ相当アリマシタ。非常ニ雨天ノ多イ旅デアリ、熱帯通過ノ六週間ハ實際毎日雨が降りマシタ。雨ニ濡レテモ着物ヲ乾ス術モアリマセンデシタ。

七、衛生設備ハ船ノ側面ニ吊ルシタ六個ノ木箱デ、一時ニ六人ノ用ハ出来マシタ。大部分ノ者ガ、下痢ヤ赤痢ニ罹リ居マシタ。テ、設備ハ全ク不充スデアリマシタ。六個ノ箱ガ航海中

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修磨達、唯一、設備アリマシク。便所へ行くニハ船艙カラ
外へエツテ外ツテ。便所へ入ルニ則ニ日本人、衛兵カラ許可ヲ
得ナケレバナリマセシメシク。勿論赤痢ヤ下痢、爲、屢々
船艙カラ出ルニハ同ニ合ハス。船艙内ニ自命、道具ヲ用意シテ
ケレバナリマセシメシク。

ハ、唯一、身体ノ洗濯法ハ一週ニ一回海水ヲホースデ浴ビ
ルニトアリマシク。一週ニ一回税船、日本人が海水ヲポンプデ
汲ニゲテ、一時ニ少数ツツ、約二十名税通ツテ係リ、日本人ニ
三十秒税ホースデ水ヲ掛ケラレルデシク。此、一國が済ム
ト勤イテ次、一國ニ場所ヲ譲ルデシク。是が修磨ニ許
サシク唯一、身体ノ洗濯法アリマシク。

九、此、船デ、食物、全クビドイモデ修磨トシテ、知、経験
デハ最悪ノモノデアリマシク。食事に主ニ米ト、悪クナツク
乾魚デアリマシク。港ヘ定ウツカラ、二三日間ハ少量ノ食物ガ
なヘラレマシク。大部分、場合我々、野菜、アリマセシメシク。
修磨達ハ急速ニ脚氣、イタリ、癩病等、栄養不良
カラクル普通ノ病氣ニ侵サレマシク。一人堂リ、日々、配給ヘ
約五日凡、米デ一千名、修磨ニ對スル日々、魚ノ量ハ約五
ポンドデアリマシク。砂糖ハ毎日修磨全員ニ對シテ合計
約十二ポンドヲナヘラレマシク。知等ハ各自ニ「スプーン」一杯ツツナヘ
ルニ元分ニナルマデ、砂糖ヲ約五、六日砂糖ノ量ヲ残シテ
置クコトニシマシク。飲水ハ制限サシク量シカナヘラレズ
渴ヲ匿スルニハ決シテ元分デハアリマセシメシク。

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十、不満は又ハ遺棄処罰ハ日常ノ出来事デアリマシタ。
殴打ハ特ニ日本人衛兵ニヨリテ修辱ニ加ヘラシメハ、何、
理由モナシニ時ニハ許可ナシニ船艙カラ外ニ出タスガデアリ。
叩カシム事ナ原因ハ、一ツハ修辱ガ將校ヤ下セデラウト
ナカラウト日本人ノ衛兵ニ敬礼シナイトデアリマシタ。
或時、一人ノ將校デアリハ、ウイスマンド、砲兵聯隊、
「ル・サウオード」中尉ガビドウ、叩カレタ。其ノ爲、三日間寝テ
レバナリタイ程デアリマシタ。

(次頁ニ續ク)

十一、病氣ノ俘虜ニ對スル醫藥機關ハアリマセンデシタ。俘虜ノ醫西者ハ「シトニー」、「バーカー」大尉デアリ彼ハ病人ニキ當カ出來ル様ニ甲板ニ狭イ場所ヲ與ヘラレテ居リマシタ。甲板六八、九名ノ重イ患者カ寢ルコトヲ許サレタ僅カバカリノ場所カアリマシタ。他ノ病人ハ船艙ニ殘ラネバリマセンデシタ。醫藥品ハ極ク少量デ殆ト言フニ足ラヌ程デアリマシタ。「バーカー」大尉ハ醫藥品ノ増加ヲ再三要求シマシタ。何等效果ハアリマセンデシタ。實際航海中俘虜ハ比日病氣ニ罹ツテ居マシタ。凡ソ九割ハ「マラリヤ」ノ再發ニ罹ツテ居リ大多數ハ航海ノ過半期間赤痢、脚氣又ハ「イタリ」癩病デモシデ居リマシタ。俘虜ハ皆營養失調ニ掛ツテ居マシタ。俘虜ノ三人カ四人カ航海中ニ死ニシマシタ。「バーカー」大尉ハ若シ航海ガ後ニ週間モ續イタラ死ニ者ハ非常ナ數ニ上ツタデアラウト推測シテ居リマシタ。二人ハ心臟脚氣デ死ニシ一人ハ「イタリ」癩病デ死ニシマシタ。一人ハ腦「マラリヤ」デ死ニマシタ。私ハ非常ナ多數死亡者ヲ出スコトヲ避ケルニ丁度間ニ合ツテ日本ヘ着イタト思ヒマシタ。

十二、私等ハ一九四四年九月日本ノ門司ニ着キマシタカ到着シタトキ俘虜達ノ狀態ハ憐ムベキモノデアリマシタ。多クノ者達ハ担架デ陸地マデ運バレナケレバナラズ、ソレテ多數ノ者ハ殆ト人デ自分自身ヲ支ベルコトカ出來ナカッタ。脚氣デ腫レタ百人カ百人ノ外ハ皆見タ處安山子ノ様ニ瘦セ衰ヘテ居リマシタ。脚氣ニ罹ツテ居ル者ノ外ハ皮ヲ被ツタ骸骨ノ様ニ見エマシタ。